

## From the Editor

NATIONAL Flag Day was designed to mark the Continental Congress' June 14, 1777, Flag Resolution that designated the Stars and Stripes as our national flag.

In our nation's family of holidays, Flag Day has been sort of like a little brother. It has to share June 14 with the Army's birthday and it's too close to Independence Day to even warrant a day off. As Rodney Dangerfield would put it, Flag Day gets no respect.

Fortunately, the flag has resurfaced in America's collective consciousness since last September's terrorist attacks. It seems the flag is everywhere. Unfortunately, our attention to the flag's proper care and display hasn't matched our zeal for flag proliferation. I don't think this is intentional — many of us simply don't know better.

To help bring a little relief to Old Glory, this issue of *Soldiers* is dedicated to Flag Day. Inside you'll find a commemorative poster that includes just about everything you'd want to know about how to properly display and care for the flag. In the magazine's centerspread, you'll find a flag-evolution chart that chronicles the flag's changes over the years.

And Happy Birthday, Army!

*John C. Suttle*

## America's Monument

I READ your March article "America's Lasting Monument," and enjoyed it very much. Thank you for the opportunity to assist in its writing by sharing my memories of long ago.

If I can be any help to you in the future please let me know.

Carl S. Benckert  
via e-mail

*THE article's author, SSG Alberto Betancourt, replies:*

*"It was truly an honor to be able to talk with you and share your memories of the construction of this great American landmark. Americans like yourself, sir, help keep this nation strong and motivate those of us in the military to preserve our freedom at whatever cost."*

## Cadet Confusion

IN the upper left hand corner of page 8 of the March 2002 issue there is a picture of a new cadet swearing-in ceremony at West Point with the following caption: "Cadets of the class of 1980 are sworn in. The first female cadets had entered West Point four years earlier."

The first female cadets were members of the class of 1980. New cadets are sworn in on their first day at West Point so the picture would have been taken in the summer of 1976, the first day there were female cadets at West Point. I know because I was there for the last two years of an all-male corps and the first two years that women were members of the corps.

Since the number of female cadets was relatively low (close to 100 out of a corps strength of about 4,000) the female cadets were only placed in the first cadet company of each battalion. I was assigned to one of

## Summer OCS

I ENJOY *Soldiers'* articles and excellent pictures. However, every once in a while an editing error slips through.

For instance, in the interesting April story regarding the OCS program at historic Fort Meade, S.D., the caption on the table of contents page placed this fort in North Dakota. Move it back to South Dakota, please.

Keep up the great work on an outstanding magazine.

MAJ Rich Crawford, USAR  
Fort Des Moines, Iowa

YOUR April article on National Guard OCS was very informative, but only told about two-thirds of the story. You adequately covered phases I and II conducted at Fort Meade, S.D., but only mentioned in passing the final phase conducted at Fort Lewis, Wash.

The phase conducted at Fort Lewis will train and evaluate approximately 800 soldiers from 35 states and territories. The Washington Army National Guard conducts its training in conjunction with ROTC's National Advanced Leadership Camp. The cooperation among the active Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserves is a model for the future "Army of One."

I believe it would be worth your time to report on the activities here at Fort Lewis so that your readers may get a glimpse of the quality training in which our future officer corps is participating.

CPT Scott A. Nelson  
via e-mail

the cadet companies that contained female cadets, including West Point's first female Rhodes scholar. As juniors, my roommate and I were in charge of a squad containing male and female cadets.

John DePiazza  
via e-mail

## Rakkasans?

I ENJOYED your April article on the 187th Infantry. But how about a little history of the nickname "Rakkasans?"

Sonny Jones  
Fort Belvoir, Va.

*According to the Fort Campbell, Ky., and 101st Airborne Division Web site ([www.campbell.army.mil](http://www.campbell.army.mil)), the nickname originated during the regiment's occupation duty in Japan immediately following the end of World War II. The unit gained the nickname because the Japanese felt that the soldiers' parachutes resembled "falling umbrellas," which is the loose translation of rakkasan.*

## Bad Example?

I AND other NCOs I work with noticed something out of place



in the April issue. On page 39, in the large photo of the Quartermaster Center's regimental celebration, there is a disturbing image front and center. A soldier appears to have a beer can in his hand.

The fact that this soldier is drinking is not disturbing. The fact that the magazine editors decided to run this picture is.

The young soldier may be 21, and if it is a beer can in his hand, he must have been authorized to drink at this function. My question is this: Did the editors of Soldiers magazine not consider the image this may portray? Most of the young people joining the military today already bring enough issues and problems with them as they start their careers. We as leaders should not give the new recruits the wrong impression from the beginning.

SFC Troy Anderson  
Fort Bragg, N.C.

*Certainly, the editors are concerned with messages conveyed by the images we publish; that's why we continually remind contributors to ensure their photos don't show obvious uniform, policy or safety violations. But we also try to balance that concern with our efforts to portray each subject as accurately and honestly as possible. In the photo you questioned, the photographer assures us that the picture was taken at an official and closely supervised function where no alcoholic beverages were authorized. If, on the other hand, this had been an activity where alcohol was permitted, would we have been honest to our readers if we had decided, as you say, to "portray" an image rather than show the Army as it really is?*

## Beret Blues

ONE solution for the Reservists

who complained in the April letter about not yet having berets would be to sign a DD Form 368, get their commander's approval and submit their beret size to their new active-Army unit.

Most active-duty soldiers have ruined their original berets (from shaving or rainstorms) and have to purchase replacements because they have not been issued a second beret. So why are we worried about issuing berets to soldiers who will only don them one weekend a month and maybe two weeks of the summer?

Reservists are not second-class soldiers, but we should first get the berets to soldiers who are required to wear them on a daily basis.

Name withheld by request

## No New Medal

IN reading Soldiers over the last few months I have noticed the continuing, back-and-forth discussions about awarding new medals in the wake of Sept. 11 and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Instead of making a new medal, we should use one we already have — the National Defense Service Medal. The purpose of this medal covers both the homeland-defense missions and Enduring Freedom.

The NDSM seems to fit exactly what we are doing for the defense of the American people.

SPC Jonathan Esposito  
Korea

**Soldiers** is for soldiers and DA civilians. We invite readers' views. Stay under 150 words — a post card will do — and include your name, rank and address. We'll withhold your name if you desire and may condense your views because of space. We can't publish or answer every one, but we'll use representative views. Write to: **Feedback, Soldiers, 9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581**, or e-mail: [soldiers@belvoir.army.mil](mailto:soldiers@belvoir.army.mil).



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